

Alabama Emergency Management Agency Winter 2009 Newsletter

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2009 Preparedness Workshop

"Overall rating is superior, excellent. Workshop was well presented and organized. Speakers were personable, professional and excellent subject matter experts. Food and lodging was outstanding."

Alabama Emergency Management Agency hosted its first Preparedness Workshop January 13-16. Session topics included special needs planning, pet preparedness, mass care sheltering and deployment issues.



Representatives of county government, state agencies and other emergency management partners were invited. Thanks to a grant that covered the facilities and materials, the only cost to participants was their lodging and evening meals.

LaTonya Stephens, Deputy Preparedness Section Chief, said she felt the workshop went very well. "We have received several requests to conduct another workshop or to combine it with the AAEM Mid-Year. AEMA will review our financial situation later in the year and make a decision then."



"I was surprised that this was really worth my time. It is nice to see AEMA providing help and assistance instead of just telling us what we need to have done yesterday."



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SAVE THE DATE

Gulf States Hurricane Conference

April 29-May 1
Mississippi Gulf
Coliseum/Civic Center,
Biloxi, Mississippi

AAEM Annual Conference

June 14-18
Riverview,
Mobile, Alabama

Emergency Alert Radios distributed in CSEPP counties

by Patricia Surrent, Project Coordinator, Metro Services

Free emergency alert radios (EARs) are being distributed to homes, schools, businesses and other locations in Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Etowah, St. Clair and Talladega counties. The innovative program is made possible by a partnership between the six county emergency management agencies (EMAs) and DHS/FEMA.

The EARs distribution is part of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) County Closeout Plan. Through CSEPP, tone alert radios (TARs) were placed in special facilities and homes

of people with special needs. TARs were offered to all locations in the Immediate Response (IRZ) and Pink Zones. The TAR program is being reduced as the risk from the chemical weapons incinerator at Anniston Army Depot is reduced.

The EAR is a Midland WR100A which is capable of receiving more than 70 different types of alerts through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards Network. The EAR includes Specific Area Messaging Encoding, or SAME, technology.



“By making the best possible use of federal funds, we have been able to offer an emergency alert device to every physical location in five counties and Calhoun County’s Protective Action Zone. Our goal is to distribute 100,000 radios in Phase One of this program which will greatly enhance community safety,” said Steve Swafford, Cleburne County EMA Director. Swafford serves as the project manager for the radio distribution.

Calhoun County’s radio distribution is based on CSEPP zones. The IRZ and Pink zones will receive the free radios in a later phase of distribution.

For more information about the EAR program, visit www.earready.us.



County Briefs

- Autauga County has a new EMA director. His name is Robert “Rocky” Milliman.
- Perry County is getting 26 safe rooms. Watch the newsletter for more information!
- Pickens County will move into a more secure and suitable EOC in April.
- EMI in Emmitsburg, MD, was the site of an Integrated Emergency Management Course for 67 representatives from Tuscaloosa, Northport, University of Alabama, and Tuscaloosa County. The group included elected officials, department heads, law enforcement, fire officials, NGOs, public works officials, AEMA and area media. Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox said it was the most important training he has ever participated in. He now has a better understanding of emergency management.
- Sumter County has been re-designated a StormReady County by the National Weather Service in Birmingham. A time and location for the presentation has not been set.
- The Huntsville office of the National Weather Service recently celebrated the fact that all counties in its service area are StormReady.
- The last VX-filled land mine that had been stored in Anniston has been safely demilitarized, according to Timothy K. Garrett, site project manager at the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF).

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Cullman County gets a new EOC!

The Cullman County EMA moved to its new facility on November 5, 2008. EMA offices and the EOC floor are located in the basement of the newly constructed building they share with the Cullman County Water Department.

Don't think that being in the basement is a negative. According to Director Phyllis Little "the space was designed and constructed to be functional even if the ground level structure was wiped off its foundation." She doesn't want to

test the design but is glad to be in a facility that will be operational even in a catastrophe.

The layout is simple. The central EOC floor is surrounded by offices with glass installed so occupants can be involved with action on the floor. It is equipped with an overhead projector and screen, audio/video equipment, and workstations for 15 people. There is space adjacent to the Public Information Office for use as a media room.

CCEMA will also be able to have training in a large room next to the EOC. It is equipped with an overhead



projector and screen and a 60" plasma television.

A new employee has been added to the EMA staff as well. Donald (Donnie) Smith will serve as the Administrative Assistant. Kelly Allen will continue to serve as the Assistant Director/Coordinator.



The Department of Public Safety is offering ICS 300 to its personnel. They are an essential part of Alabama's response in an emergency. These classes increase the NIMS compliance of the State of Alabama.

Classes were offered January 25-26 and February 18-19 at the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center in Selma.



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Tuscaloosa County David Hartin, Director

Best Practices—Relationships

Tuscaloosa EMA has a very close working relationship with a variety of organizations that operate in the county. These include:

- non-governmental organizations (Salvation Army and the American Red Cross)
- the ham-radio community
- Volunteers Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)
- area volunteer fire departments
- professional and civic organizations



Many of you have relationships with organizations in your community. In Tuscaloosa it is a purposeful effort.

David Hartin and his staff have more than just occasional contact with members of community groups. They make sure members of those groups know they are appreciated and that they know they have a role in response and recovery during an emergency.

Hartin is a member of the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Committee. He and his staff work to maintain a diverse set of contacts in a variety of disciplines.

Director Long recently requested that the counties formally share their best practices so they can be captured in one location. We want to begin sharing some of your best practices in this newsletter.

To submit a best practice, please contact Pete McGough in the AEMA office in Clanton (pete.mcgough@ema.alabama.gov).

Coffee County John Tallas, Director

Best Practices—Notification Systems

Coffee County EMA (CCEMA) maintains as complete a warning system as possible to protect its residents. This takes the form of both outdoor warning sirens and NOAA radios which have been installed in county schools and senior citizen centers. They test and maintain as much as possible themselves so they are more self-sufficient.



CCEMA maintains 26 outdoor warning sirens that have been installed over a period of ten years. As they were installed, CCEMA requested lists of parts that would need to be replaced in the course of regular use. They established a small stockpile of repair parts and had personnel trained to effect repairs as quickly as possible. Regular testing, with on-site monitoring, results in a system that truly serves the county.

School and senior center weather radios are installed and programmed by CCEMA personnel to ensure they are set to receive the correct alert information. Periodic checks are made to ensure that radios are operational. Replacements are provided at no charge by CCEMA.



November meeting of the Alabama Mutual Aid Advisory Council Funding Sub-Committee

The Alabama Mutual Aid Advisory Council Funding Sub-Committee meets annually to review Mutual Aid Team reports and team requests for funding. They make recommendations to the Executive Advisory Council regarding funding priorities for the teams that exist in Alabama. According to Bill Atchison members of this committee have shown themselves to be both a resource and an asset as they have found alternate sources of funding and training on occasion.

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The AAEM Winter Conference was held in January at Hotel Capstone in Tuscaloosa. There were a wide variety of topics from Mass Sheltering to the Oklahoma City Bombing to stress management. Remember that the Annual Conference, will be June 14-18 at the Riverview in Mobile, Alabama.



(L) Mass Shelter Task Force Update. (R) Citizen Corps Update

Below: (Left to right, upper to lower) Damage Assessments, National Weather Service Update, Greg Bugliese receives ALEM, Jessica Cummins: A Personal Story from the Oklahoma City Bombing



Those recognized for certification levels were:

Advanced Level Emergency Manager

Debbie Blevins, Calhoun County EMA
Kirk Paradise, Huntsville/Madison County EMA
Doug Pugliese, Kimberly Fire Department
Joel Stokley, Prattville
Donald Walker, Gadsden/Etowah County EMA

Intermediate Emergency Manager

Ken Belcher, Smith Station
Doug Smith, Blount County EMA
James Warren, Dyersburg, TN
Ric Wilkinson, HEMSI

Basic Emergency Manager

Clay Warmbrod, Huntsville Police Department

Recertification

Mark Senf

Missed last time:

Don Deschaine, Athens, AL (Sept. 2008)



Above: (L) Debbie Blevins receives ALEM (R) Eddie Hicks
Below: Lee Helms laughs with attendees at the January 27 After Hours event.



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EMA family helps send Christmas stockings to soldiers

AEMA Field Coordinator Stephanie Gibson loves her kids. Her youngest son, Chad, is in Iraq so she made sure he had mail from home. Because he has a good heart Chad told her about other members of his unit who were not getting mail or packages from home. He asked her to send them his next package. That gave Stephanie the idea to send Christmas stocking to soldiers in Iraq.

The EMA family showed its willingness to give. Employees in the AEMA office, St Clair County EMA, Autauga County EMA, Perry County EMA, Wilcox County EMA and Sumter County EMA joined the

Chilton County community to provide 366 stockings. Boxes of stockings went to Ramidi and Balad, Iraq and to a unit in Kuwait. Money not used after mailing the stockings was given to a group of ladies who buy pajama bottoms, t-shirts and socks for hospitalized soldiers in Germany.



Above
Chad Gibson (R) and a friend in Iraq
Left
Some of the stockings mailed to soldiers



Montgomery City/County Emergency Management Agency held its Family Preparedness Day on Saturday, February 21. The National Weather Service, Red Cross, the Sheriff's Department, Alabama Power, Montgomery Fire-Rescue and others provided information to shoppers at Eastdale Mall.

New Joint Information Center

Auburn University held an Open House on Monday, February 23, to showcase its new JIC and Media Center located at the Auburn University Hotel/Dixon Conference Center.

If a tragedy occurred at Auburn that resulted in widespread media coverage the JIC could be set up in a short amount of time.

Leaders and Public Information Officers from area organizations were invited to familiarize themselves with the JIC.



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above and below: Mike Robinson's luncheon on his last day at EMA. He was sad to leave us but is more than glad to be flying again!



right: Tim explains the EOC floor to British Consul-General Martin Rickerd when he visited on December 3. Mr. Rickerd has done CERT training along with the entire staff of the British Consulate in Atlanta.



left: David Coggins was a natural when interviewed for an upcoming Poarch Creek Tribal video.

Birthdays!

February

18 Larry S
20 Debra
21 Kristy
26 Bill A
27 Judy



March

3 Kathy
10 Pam
14 Yasamie
17 Karla
19 Jeb
20 Ginger
26 Lydia

April

2 Terry H
6 Richard
6 Brock
8 Sandra C
8 Stephanie
18 Alicia
28 Benny

May

1 Janice
2 Karen
7 Charlotte
13 Sandra L
16 Rhonda
20 Laurissa
20 Marieke
21 Brett
23 Brooke
25 Bill F
30 Benjie

June

1 June
4 Jeff B.
6 Rebecca
19 Fred

right: A group from AEMA recently spent time together outside of work. They enjoyed painting together.



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We offer Best Wishes to Kathy Pendley Cox (IT Section) on her February 12 marriage to Gregg Cox!



Employees who received service pins and certificates for 2008

5 years:

Terry DeVaughn
Linda Eggler
Bill Filter
Stephanie Gibson
Jeb Hargrove
Dan Isley
Ricky Little
Sandra Lucas
Perry Martin
June Mims
Lisa Smith

15 years:

Terry Holley
Frank McCrory

20 years:

Sherry Cleckler
Phyllis Hardee
Karen Rasberry
Judy Woods

30 years:

Carol Nobles

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Changes at AEMA

New Employees

Leigh Ann Cleckler, PCO I, Operations Section/Communications Room
Pam Cook, EM Program Specialist, Operations Section
Laurissa Millican, EM Planner; Operations Section/Public Assistance

New Temporary Employee

Philip Ritch, Student Aide, rotating through all Sections

Promotions

Patrick Tritz to EM Planning Manager; Preparedness Section

Separations

Mike Robinson 11/15/08
Jerry McRay retired 12/31/08

Did you know?

- Divisions are now called Sections at AEMA
- Benjie Abbott is the Acting Director of the Recovery Section
- Fred Springall is the Acting Director of the IT Section
- Pete McGough moved to the Executive Section in November
- There is a new Branch Title in the Executive Section--External Affairs
- The Field Coordinator Area map has been updated.



left: Jerry McRay is presented with one of the tokens of appreciation he received at his retirement celebration. right: Ginger serves punch while Jerry spends time with attendees.



Meet Philip Ritch Student Intern

Philip is spending time at AEMA as a part of his Master's Degree in Emergency Management. He is a student at Jacksonville State University and plans to graduate in August of 2009.

Philip is from Mobile originally. He is married to Amy. They have a six year old daughter named Sarah.

Internal Training Schedule

As part of the Professional Development series of AEMA's Internal Training Program we are pleased to announce the upcoming schedule.

If you are interested in attending please notify Kyle Eskridge or Judy Woods for registration.

Department of Transportation/ Contraflow Training

Tuesday, March 10
1:00 until 3:00 pm
Media Room

Outlook training
Monday, March 16
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
EOC floor

Watch for details on upcoming training on the Automatic External Defibrillators and more.



Recent Strategic Stockpile Training at EMA in Clanton

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State employees, resolve to be HEALTHIER in 2009!

Did you know that on January 1, 2010, the Alabama State Insurance Board will assess a new \$25 monthly premium? This can be offset by a similar discount if you participate in a SEIB sponsored health screening or have results certified to the SEIB by your personal physician.

More information is available on the ALSEIB web site at <http://www.alseib.org/HealthInsurance/SEHIP/HealthWatch/WellnessWatch.aspx>. You may also check out the January/February 2009 issue of *HealthWatch*, a publication of the Alabama State Employee's Insurance Board. *HealthWatch* is available on their website.



AEMA did a personal walking challenge beginning January 4, 2009. Nineteen employees signed up and actually walked. A prize drawing was held at the All Hands Meeting on February 27. Winners were Rhonda Stange, Linda Egger, Craig Blakely, and Donna Baker. Pete McGough won grand prize which was a heart rate monitor.

Team Challenge

Walk the State!
AEMA staff are currently challenging one another as teams compete to walk the length of the state from north to south. This will be a total of 330 miles per person.



Capital Steps Challenge

Alabama was one of 14 states who participated in the Capital Steps Challenge. This two week event was sponsored by Virgin HealthMiles. The winning state will receive money to help with efforts to reduce childhood obesity.

Members of the Governor's staff and cabinet wore special pedometers and uploaded their progress to a central database.

We know where our state ranks but we can't release the information yet.

AEMA External Affairs Officer Sandra Lucas (420,000 steps) and Director Brock Long (319,000 steps) ranked first and second among Alabama walkers. This was WAY above average.

Way to go guys!

Alabama Emergency Management Agency

Information Channel

Send information to Yasamie and Lauree to post announcements on our in-house channel.

View while at the EOC on Channel 60.

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Mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Mitigation efforts provide value to the American people by (1) creating safer communities by reducing loss of life and property, (2) enabling individuals to recover more rapidly from flood and other disasters, and (3) lessening the financial impact on the Treasury, States, Tribes, and communities.

from www.fema.gov

Bibb County officials are mitigating the danger faced by the residents of that county through community shelters. The newly completed shelters are wind-reinforced to protect those who take shelter during severe weather. Funds were provided on a cost-share basis as a part of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

According to Wayne Hayes, Director of Bibb County EMA, the only real shelter in the county used to be the EMA office. It was originally the Civil Defense Shelter. Even at the best of times the number of people who could be sheltered there was limited.

Now there are three community shelters located in different parts of the county. The

shelters are located at Woodstock Elementary School, West Blockton Elementary School and Randolph Elementary School. Each shelter is large enough for the children and staff at the school plus others who may seek shelter. In fact, it was determined early in the process



that no one would be turned a w a y when the shelter was activated.

B i b b County EMA and the Red Cross have put together a Plan of Operation and a team to operate each shelter. Local police or fire departments have a key in case severe weather occurs outside school hours. A generator is

installed to supply electricity when needed.

Mitigation is a community responsibility and Bibb County is working to reduce the chances that lives will be lost during severe weather.



Fire Grant Reminder

Funding Opportunity Number: DHS-08-FEMA-044-001

Closing Date for Applications: March 6, 2009

The purpose of the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants is to fund fire prevention activities and to research and develop improvements to firefighter safety. Fire prevention grants are designed to reach high-risk target groups and mitigate incidences of deaths and injuries caused by fire and related hazards. Fire Prevention and Safety grants are separated into two "activities". The projects that can be funded are listed below:

(1) Fire Prevention and Safety: Applicants can apply for up to three projects. Public education campaigns, Smoke Alarms, Sprinkler Awareness, Code Enforcement/Awareness, Firefighter Safety, Training, Wildfire Prevention /Awareness, Arson Prevention/Awareness, Risk Assessment, General Prevention/Awareness. Applicants requesting Risk Assessments are precluded for applying for additional projects.

(2) Firefighter Safety Research and Development: The purpose of this funding activity is to improve firefighter health and life safety through research and development projects. All projects must address injury outcomes or their surrogates such as firefighter fitness or health indicators. Applicants must submit only one application during this application period and may include either one or both activities.

The online application is accessible through the following website, www.firegrantsupport.com

(information from www.grants.gov)



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Severe weather season is upon us again. All of us are mindful of the importance of a prepared citizenry. We also are more aware than ever how important it is for the EMA family to be prepared to respond to events that may occur.

AEMA is dedicated to building capability in Alabama counties. This is reflected in the 65% passthrough of EMPG funds. We are passing through more EMPG money than ever before. Many counties have received or will receive increases of as much as \$12,000 because of your dedication to raising the standards in emergency management to a more professional level.

We are keeping an eye on legislation that might impact emergency management. The bill involving a Statewide Disaster fund has been introduced. We will be watching its progress through the legislative process. With regards to stimulus package funding, we will be doing research to determine whether any of those funds will be helpful to emergency management organizations.

Exercises and workshops such as the Governor and Key Cabinet Pandemic Flu Workshop will serve to increase readiness. These events raise the visibility of emergency management efforts for the public and for policy makers. The agency calendar and upcoming training information is available on the County Director web site.

Recently we held an All Hands meeting for AEMA staff. Efforts are underway to grow a unity of vision as we work together for common goals. Everyone on staff in Clanton has an important role as we support the counties and work to make Alabama the most prepared state in the country.

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AEMA staff collected toys and money to help Chilton County families have a happy holiday. Operation: Santa Claus is sponsored by the Chilton County Sheriff's Department.

This picture was taken when the gifts were picked up on December 11. This is the third year the agency has participated in this campaign.

Sometimes it's good to stop and reflect on who we are as an agency and also remind ourselves what our mission is each day. Our mission is to assist local government in preparedness. AEMA also works with state agencies to facilitate disaster readiness and response. As an agency we work with and maintain a partnership with all federal agencies.

Be Prepared!

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If you have an article, pictures or other information you would like to submit for the next edition of the newsletter contact Yasamie Richardson or Lauree Ashcom in the Public Information Office at 205.208.2275 or 2255.